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SUBJECT: UN REFORM: U/S BURNS AND DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL
MARK MALLOCH BROWN, MAY 9

Classified By: Ambassador Alex Wolff, Deputy Permanent Representative,
for reasons 1.4 b,d.

11. (C) Summary. Deputy SYG Mark Malloch Brown told U/S Burns May 9 that the UN faced a looming crisis over the upcoming expiration of the spending cap. He encouraged early agreement among key delegations on a set of reforms that could be accomplished by the end of June and which would then allow the cap to be lifted. In the mandate review process, he thought there were significant savings to be found in the reduction of Secretariat reports, but that it would not be possible to target the significant political mandates, including the Palestinian mandates. U/S Burns pressed the UN reform agenda and said we would work to close the divisions with the G-77 and other member states but needed to see tangible evidence that the G-77 would meet us halfway. U/S Burns briefed Malloch Brown on U.S. support for the Capital Master Plan, and relayed U.S. views on UN SYG selection and UNSC expansion. U/S Burns also updated Malloch Brown on the continuing efforts to halt Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons.
End Summary.

12. (U) Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns met with UN Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown on Tuesday, May 9. Malloch Brown was accompanied by Mark Suzman, a Principal Officer in the SYG's Executive Office. U/S Burns was joined by USUN Deputy PR Alex Wolff, P Special Assistant Stefanie Amadeo and a USUN notetaker.

UN Reform (and Renovation)

13. (C) Malloch Brown opened by expressing concern about the upcoming expiration of the spending cap imposed on the Secretariat last year. He urged member states to agree early

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on a specific package of reforms that are required in order to lift the cap, and he returned to this point three times during the course of the discussion. He noted that the Capital Master Plan (CMP) was "in a bad state" with the recent departure of the "very capable" Fritz Reuter who left "blaming the U.S. and the UN in equal measure." Malloch Brown emphasized that the Secretariat building was a "huge hazard" for the City of New York, but admitted that, "If we try to do this as a UN operation, it's very likely that it just won't get done." He complained about micromanagement from the G-77 and competing interests among the New York real estate community. U/S Burns told Malloch Brown that the U.S. supports the Capital Master Plan and noted that we were currently reaching out to Congressional leaders on this plan. He urged Malloch Brown to also meet with key Congressional

leaders on this issue.

¶4. (C) On mandate review, Malloch Brown thought that there were early savings, particularly in the area of reports and documentation. He thought that it was reasonable to expect a twenty percent reduction in reports. However, it would be much more difficult to get movement on the bigger political mandates, including the Palestinian mandates and the regional economic commissions. The Palestinian mandates, he said, would be "almost impossible." Despite their "symbolic value," he added, they are not worth the effort and political capital that the U.S. would have to expend at this point. Malloch Brown urged the U.S. to focus on concrete, attainable, and non-polemic goals between now and the end of June. He stressed that the U.S. should reach out to the G-77 on ECOSOC reform and the UNGA development resolution. U/S Burns agreed but noted that this needed to be a two-way street and that the G-77 also needed to work constructively with the U.S. and other like-minded countries. Malloch Brown added that the procurement report and the overview of corporate governance reports would be released soon and hoped that the recommendations in these reports would help on budget issues. He added that the UN Secretariat should move forward on procurement issues.

¶5. (C) U/S Burns and Malloch Brown also discussed the selection of the next UN Secretary General. They reviewed the status of the current announced candidates and agreed on the need to keep in touch on this issue. Malloch Brown indicated he believed the next candidate would most likely come from Asia.

Darfur and Iran

¶6. (C) Malloch Brown called the Darfur Ministerial debate (which was continuing live on a TV behind him) "a very good" session. "We need to put all our energies behind Darfur."

He cautioned the U.S. to be aware of the perception of NATO involvement in the region. "We all welcome NATO support," he said, "But it's a real red rag to the Sudanese who reject the NATO-UN link." He suggested that linking the two assessment teams in statements or resolutions from the Security Council would make it more difficult for the UN to get visas for their own.

¶7. (C) U/S Burns provided a brief readout of the discussions on Iran, noting that the U.S. was "truly on a diplomatic path" and would continue to press for a Chapter VII resolution from the Council, "though we're not there yet." Malloch Brown responded, "We're just going to stay out of this."

India at the UN

¶8. (C) In response to a question from U/S Burns regarding India's role in the General Assembly, Malloch Brown noted that he was coming to the conclusion that there are five players "behind all our problems." The G-77 used to be frivolous, he said, but now India, South Africa and Brazil have joined Egypt and Pakistan to form a significant core of opposition to meaningful reform. Noting that the five were considered good friends of the U.S., Malloch Brown suggested that their antagonism in New York was part of a "balancing act." Because your relationship is so good, he said, they need to take it out on you here as a "safety valve" for segments of their population who do not support U.S. policy.

¶9. (C) Malloch Brown also suggested that much of India's positioning, including its efforts to increase the GA's role in the SYG selection process, is related to its Security Council aspirations. U/S Burns emphasized that our position on Security Council enlargement had not changed. The U.S. remained in favor of expansion and could support a proposal that called for a modest expansion by five or six seats of a

mixture of permanent and semi-permanent members. Malloch Brown recommended against any action on Security Council enlargement now, based on the difficult political atmosphere, but that it would help diffuse pressure if the U.S., UK and France made clear that they were willing to return to the subject as part of a normal course of action in New York.

¶10. (U) Under Secretary Burns has reviewed this cable.
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